1: Fitzgerald H-5 (1937-1938) AE3 Sino-Tibetan
Border Peoples AE3

133 and blocked by snow for six months of the year, is only used by wood cutters and charcoal burners. Elsewhere the knife edge crest of the range is so precipitous and so overgrown with dense rain forest as to be inaccessible. At a few points it is possible to reach the crest, but the western face being more precipitous than the eastern, it is never possible to cross the range.

162 633 Ten miles up the plain from Hsia Kuan is the city of Ta Li, capital of the *hsien* or county of the same name, and an important military and governmental centre for a wider region. Ta Li itself, a city of about 20,000 inhabitants,[1] is an ancient place, the capital in the seventh and eighth centuries A.D. of the Kingdom of Nan Chao, which covered the greater part of the modern Yunnan province. As the centre of government it has a mixed population including Chinese Mohammedans, formerly more numerous than at present, immigrant Chinese from Ssu Ch'uan province, and mixed families of Chinese and Min Chia descent, but at least one third of the inhabitants of the city are Min Chias. The villages of the plain, of which there are more than one hundred, are entirely Min Chia, apart from a small number of Mohammedan villages.

133 The plain of Ta Li, though the most easily defended, is not one of the largest or richest of the lake plateaux of Yunnan. Approximately 100 square miles in area, it is much smaller than that of Yunnanfu (or K'un Ming) in the east of the province, or than the plain of Pao Shan to the west, from which the ancient lake has now disappeared. Cramped between the mountain and the lake the Ta Li plateau is nowhere more than three miles wide, and in many places the cultivable area is much narrower. On the other hand the high range to the west ensures a constant water supply, for

[1] No census exists, but this figure is that generally given by inhabitants and officials of the place, and accords with a personal estimate.

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312 As the city lies at the foot of the high Ts'ang Shan range there is an abundant water supply. Small streams led off from the mountain torrents have been conducted into the city by tunnels under the walls and flow swiftly by the side of the lanes across the city from west to east. They are used as power for water mills, for washing clothes, and for irrigation, drinking water being obtained from numerous wells.

361 In the eastern half of the enclosure, where streams wind along among groves of willows, and farmhouses lie hidden among large shade trees and clumps of bamboo, the visitor is surprised, on seeing the city wall, to find that among these rural surroundings he is still within the city itself. Indeed, seen from a high point on the mountain, Ta Li with its creeper-clad walls and the dense groves of trees in the gardens looks more like a wood than a city, a huge walled garden set in the wide spaces of green, watery rice fields.

633 438 This rural character is well suited to a town which is in fact entirely dependent on agriculture for its commerce and industries. The primary function of a small city such as Ta Li is to provide a market for the peasants and to act as a distributing point for the goods which the farming population need. It is also a centre where the richer families can live in a security which the open country did not always afford; where there are schools, law courts, government offices and the headquarters of an important military command. But though this apparatus of government gives an urban air to the town and nourishes a small trade in books, and other articles used by the educated minority, the rice standard really rules the city just as surely as it does the country village. The commerce of Ta Li depends on the price of rice and the industries cater for the needs of the peasants.

369 443 The interdependence between town and country is not confined to trade, for the inhabitants of the town itself are largely farmers who also have homes in the country villages.